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OF
THE FIRST PUBLICATION CONCERNING AMERICA.

LETTER
OF
Christopher Columbus
TO
RAFAEL SANCHEZ,

WRITTEN ON BOARD THE CARAVEL WHILE RETURNING FROM
HIS FIRST VOYAGE.

PUBLISHED AT BARCELONA, MAY, 1493.

CHICAGO:
THE W. H. LOWDERMILK CO.
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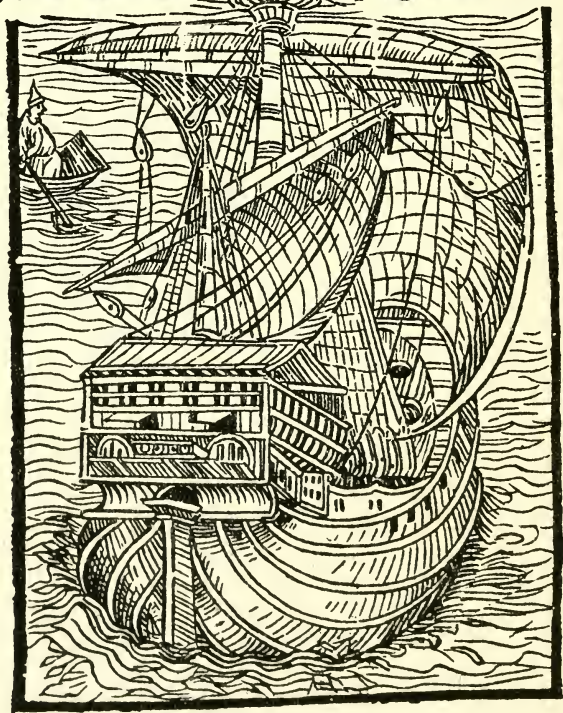
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THIS BOOK PRESENTED BY
Mrs. Charles Friesell

Regnū hyspanie.



Oceanica Classis



De Insulis inuentis

Epistola Cristoferi Colom (cui etas nostra multū debet : de Insulis in mari Indico nup inuētis. Ad quas perquirendas octauo antea mense: auspicijs et ere Inuictissimi Fernandi Hispaniarum Regis missus fuerat) ad Magnificum dñm Raphaelez Sanxis: eiusdē serenissimi Regis Thesaurariū missa. quam nobilis ac litterat⁹ vir Aliander d Cosco: ab Hispano ydeomate in latinū conuertit: tercio kl's Maij. M. cccc. xciiij. Pontificatus Alexandri Sexti Anno Primo.

Cloniam suscepte prouintie rem pfectam me psecutum fuisse: gratū tibi fore scio: has pstitui exarare: que te vnius cuiusq; rei in hoc nostro itinere geste inuenteq; admoneāt. Tricesimo tertio die postq; Gadibus discessi: in mare Indicū perueni: vbi plurimas Insulas innumeris habitatas hominib⁹ reperi: quarū oim p felicissimo Rege nostro: preconio celebrato ⁊ vexillis extensis: cōtradicante nemine possessionē accepi. primeq; earum: diui Saluatoris nomen imposui (cuius fret⁹ auxilio) tam ad hāc q̄ ad ceteras alias puenim⁹. Eam vero Indi

Insula hispana



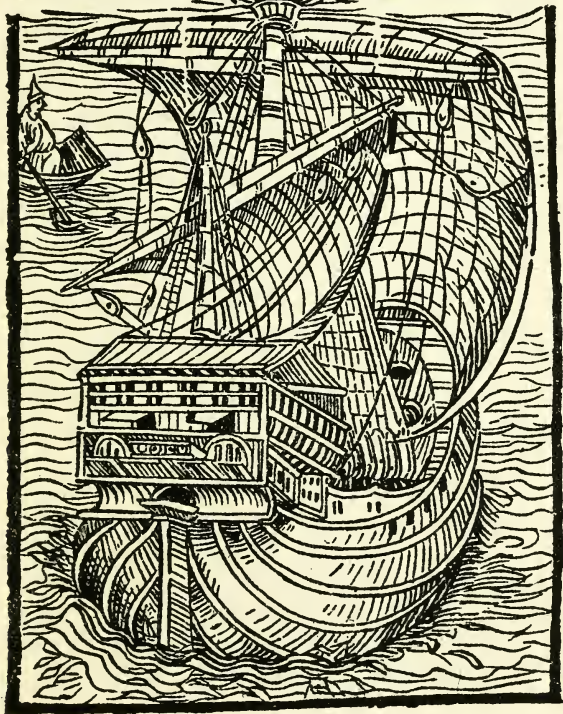
Guanahany vocant. Aliar etiá vná quanq̃
 nouo nomine nuncupauit. Quispe aliam Insu-
 lam Sancte Marie Cōceptiōis. aliam Fernā-
 dinam. aliaz Ihsabellam. aliā Iohanam. ⁊ sic
 de reliquis appellari iussi. Quāprimū ī eā In-
 sulam quā dudū Iohanam vocari dixi apuli-
 mus: iuxta ei⁹ littus occidentē versus aliquā-
 tulum processi: tamq̃ eam magnā nullo reper-
 to sine inueni: vt non insulam: sed cōtinentem
 Chataꝝ prouinciā esse crediderim: nulla tamē
 vidēs opida municipiaue in maritimis sita cō-
 finibus: p̃ter aliquos vicos ⁊ p̃edia rustica:
 cum quorū incolis loqui nequibam: quare si-
 mul ac nos videbant surripiebāt fugam. Pro-
 grediebar vltra: existimans aliquam me vrbē
 villasue inuenturum. Deniq̃ videns q̃ longe
 admodum p̃gressis: nihil noui emergebat: et
 huiusmodi via nos ad Septentrionem defere-
 bat: q̃ ipse fugere exoptabam: terris etenim re-
 gnabat bruma: ad austrumq̃ erat in voto cō-
 tendere: nec minus venti flagitantibus succe-
 debāt. cōstitui alios nō operiri successus: et sic
 retrocedens ad portum quendam quem signa-
 ueram sum reuersus: vnde duos hoies ex nos-
 tris in terram misi. qui inuestigarent: esset ne
 Rex in ea prouincia/ vrbesue alique. hñ per



tres dies ambularūt inuenerūtq̄ innumeros
populos ⁊ habitatōes: paruas tñ et absq̄ vllō
regimine: quaprop̄ redierūt. Interea ego iā
intellexerā a q̄busdam Indis: quos ibidē sus-
ceperā: quō hmōi prouincia: insula quidem
erat. ⁊ sic perrexi orientē versus: ei⁹ semp strin-
gens littoza vsq̄ ad miliaria .cccxxij. vbi ipsi⁹
insule sunt extrema. hinc aliā insulā ad orien-
tem prosperi: distantem ab hac Johana milia-
ribus. liiij. quā protinus Hispanam dixi: in eā-
q̄ cōcessi: ⁊ dixi iter quasi p̄ Septentrionez
quē admodū in Johana ad orientem: miliaria
olxiiij. que dicta Johana ⁊ alie ibidem insule
q̄ fertilissime existunt. hec multis atq̄ tutissi-
mis ⁊ latis: nec alijs quos vnq̄ viderim cōpa-
randis portib⁹: est circū data. multi maximi ⁊
salubres hanc interfluūt fluuij. multi quoq̄ et
eminētissimi in ea sunt montes. Omnes he insu-
le sunt pulcerrime ⁊ varijs distincte figuris: p̄-
uie: ⁊ maxima arborū varietate sidera lamben-
tiū plene: q̄s nūq̄ folijs priuari credo: quip-
pe vidi eas ita virētes atq̄ decoras: ceu mēse
Maio ī hispania solēt eē: q̄ ⁊ alie florētes: alie
fructuose: alie ī alio statu: s̄m vnus cuiusq̄ q̄ li-
tatē vigebāt: garriebat philomena: ⁊ alij passe-
res varij ac innumeri: mēse Nouēbris q̄ ip̄e per
eas deambulabā. Sunt p̄terea in dicta insula

Jobana septē vel octo palmarū genera: q̄ p̄ce-
ritate ⁊ pulchritudie (quēadmodū cetere oēs
arbores/herbe/fructusq̄) n̄ras facile exuperāt
Sūt ⁊ mirabiles pin⁹/agri/⁊ prata vastissima/
varie aues/varie mella/variaq̄ metalla:ferro
excepto. In ea aut̄ quā Hispanā supra dixim⁹
nūcupari: maximi sunt mōtes ac pulcri: vasta
rura/nemora/campi feracissimi/feri/pacisq̄ ⁊
cōdendis edificijs aptissimi. Portuū in hac in-
sula cōmoditas: ⁊ p̄stantia fluminū copia salu-
britate admixta hoīm:q̄ nisi quis viderit: cre-
dulitatē supat. Huius arbores pasqua ⁊ fruct⁹
multum ab illis Jobane differūt. Hec p̄terea
Hispana diuerso aromatis genere/auro/me-
tallisq̄ abundat. cui⁹ quidē ⁊ oīm aliarū quas
ego vidi: ⁊ quaz cognitionē habeo: icole vtri-
usq̄ sexus nudi semp̄ incedūt: quēadmodum
edunt in lucem. preter aliquas feminas. q̄ fo-
lio frondeue aliq̄: aut bombicino velo: pudē-
da operiūt: qd̄ ip̄e sibi ad id negocij parāt. Ca-
rent hi om̄es (vt supra dixi) quocunq̄ genere
ferri. carent ⁊ armis: vtpote sibi ignotis nec ad
ea sūt apti. nō pp̄ corpis deformitatē (cū sint
bñ formati) s̄ qz sūt timidi ac pleni formidine.
gestāt tñ p̄ armis arūdines sole pustas: ī quaz
radicib⁹ hastile q̄ddā ligneū siccū ⁊ in mucro-
nē attenuatū figūt: neq̄ his audēt iugif̄ vti. nā

Oceanica Classis



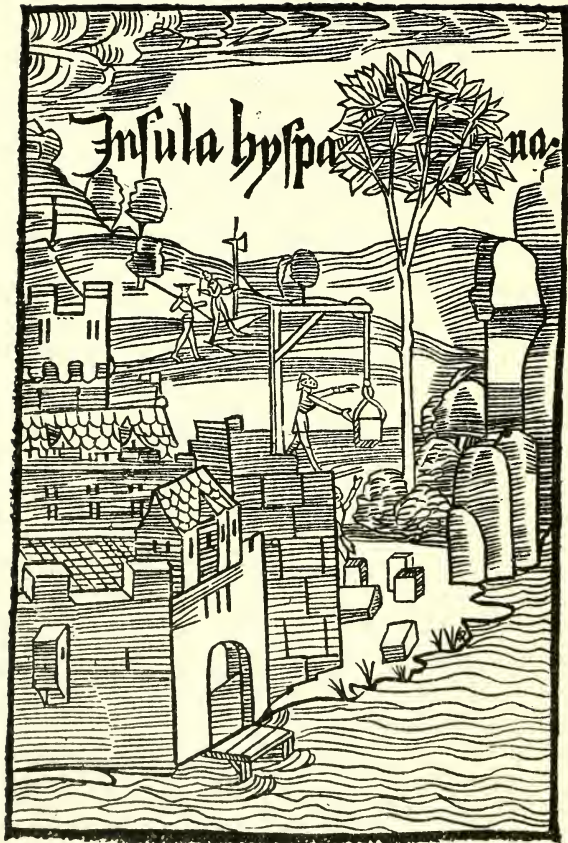
sepe euenit cū miserim duos vel tris homines
ex meis ad aliquas villas: vt cū eaz loquerē-
tur incolis: exiisse agmē glomeratū ex Indis:
et vbi nostros appropinquare videbāt: fugam
celeriter arripuisse: despretis a patre liberis ⁊
ecōtra. ⁊ hoc nō q̄ cuipiam eozū damnū aliq̄s
vel iniuria illata fuerit: immo ad quoscūq; ap-
puli ⁊ q̄bus cū verbū facere potui: quicq̄d ha-
bebā sum elargit⁹: pannū aliaq; p̄ multa: nulla
mibi facta versura: sed sunt natura pauidi ac
timidi. Letez vbi se cernūt tutos: om̄i metu re-
pulso: sunt ad modū simplices ac bone fidei: ⁊
in om̄ibus que habent liberalissimi: roganti q̄
possidet inficiat̄ nemo: quin ipsi nos ad id po-
scendum inuitāt. Maximū erga oēs amorē p̄-
seferūt: dāt queq; magna p̄ paruis. minima lz-
re nihiloue p̄tenti: ego att̄n̄ phibui ne tam mi-
nima ⁊ nulli⁹ p̄cij hisce darenf: vt sunt lancis/
parapsidii / vitriq; fragmēta / jtez clauī / ligule /
quanq; si hoc poterāt adipisci: videbat̄ eis pul-
cerrima mūdi possidere iocalia. Accidit enim
quēdam nauitā: tantū auri pondus habuisse
p̄ vna ligula: quāti sūt tres aurei solidi: ⁊ sic
alios p̄ alijs m̄ioris p̄cij: p̄sum p̄ blanquis no-
uis: ⁊ q̄busdā nūmis aurcis: p̄ q̄b⁹ habēdis da-
bāt q̄cqd petebat vēditor: puta vnciā cū dimi-
dia ⁊ duas auri: vl̄ trigita ⁊ q̄dragita bombic

pondo: quã ipi iã nouerãt. Itẽ arcuum/ampho
re/hydrie/dolijq̃ fragmẽta: bombice ⁊ auro tã
q̃ bestie cõparabãt. qđ quia iniquũ sane erat:
vetui: dedi q̃ eis multa pulcra ⁊ grata q̃ mecũ
tulerã nullo iterueniẽte p̃mio: vt eos mihi fa-
cili⁹ p̃ciliarẽ: fierẽt q̃ xp̃icole: ⁊ vt sint proni in
amorẽ erga Regẽ Reginã principesq̃ nostros
et vniuersas gẽtes Hispanie: ac studeãt p̃gre-
re ⁊ coaceruare: easq̃ nobis tradere q̃b⁹ ipi af-
fluũt ⁊ nos magnope idigem⁹. Nullã hij nozũt
ydolatriã: imo firmissime credũt oẽz vim: oẽz
potẽtiã: oĩa deniq̃ bona esse i celo: meq̃ inde
cũ his nauib⁹ ⁊ nautis descẽdisse: atz b̃ aĩo vbi
fui susceptus postq̃ metũ repulerãt. Nec sunt
segnes aut rudes: quin summi ac p̃spicacis in-
genij: ⁊ hoies qui transfretãt mare illd: nõ sine
admiratiõẽ vniuscuiusq̃ rei rationẽ reddunt:
sed nõ q̃ viderunt gentes vestitas: neq̃ naues
hmõĩ Ego statim atq̃ ad mare illd pueni: e pri-
ma insula quosdã Indos violenter arripui: q̃
ediscerẽt a nobis: ⁊ nos piter docerent ea: q̃z
ipsi in hisce partibus cognitionẽ habebant. et
ex voto successit: nã breui nos ipos: ⁊ hij nos:
tum gestu ac signis: tum verbis intellexerunt.
magnoq̃ nobis fuere emolumẽto. veniunt mō
mecũ tñ qui semp putant me desiluisse e celo
q̃uis diu nobiscũ versati fuerint hodieq̃ ver-

sent. et hi erant primi: quod id quocumque appellabamus nunciabant: alij deinceps alijs elata voce dicentes. Venite venite et videbitis gētes ethereas. Quāobrem tā semie quā viri: tā impuberes quā adulti: tam iuvenes quā senes: disposita formidine paulo ante precepta: nos certatim visebant magna iter stipate caterua alijs cibū/ alijs potum afferentibus: maximo cum amore ac beniuolentia incredibili. Habet unaqueque insula multas scaphas solidi ligni: et si angustas: longitudine tamen ac forma nostris biremibus similes: cursu autem velociores. Regunt remis tantummodo. Harum quedam sunt magne: quedam parue: quedam in medio consistunt. Plures tamen biremi que remigent duodeviginti transtris maiores: cum quibus in omnes illas insulas: que innumere sunt: traiecit. cumque his suam mercaturam exerceret: et inter eos commercia fiunt. Aliquas ego harum biremium seu scapharum: vidi quae vehebant septuaginta et octuaginta remiges. In omnibus his insulis nulla est uersitas inter gentis effigies. nulla in moribus atque loquela: quin omnes se intelligunt aduicem: que res utilis est ad id quod serenissimum Regem nostrum exoptare precipue reor: scilicet eorum ad sanctam christi fidem peruersionem. cui quidem quantum intelligere potui facilissimi sunt et primum. Dixi quae

admodū sum pgressus antea insulā Iohanaꝝ
p rectū tramitez occasus in orientem miliaria
cccxxij. fm quā viā ⁊ inuallū itineris possum
dicere hāc Iohanā esse maiorē Angliā ⁊ Scu
tia sil:nanqꝫ vltra dicta. cccxxij. passulū milia:
in ea pte q̄ ad occidentē p̄spectat: due: quas
non petij: sup sunt puincie: quaz alterā Indi
Anan vocāt: cui⁹ accolle caudati nascunt. Tē
dunt in longitudinem ad miliaria. clxxx. vt ab
his q̄s veho mecū Indis p̄cepi: qui om̄is has
callēt insulas. Hispanie vero ambit⁹ maior est
total Hispania a cologna vsqꝫ ad fontē ravidū
hincqꝫ facile arguit q̄ quartū ei⁹ lat⁹ qd̄ ipe
p rectā lineā occidentis in orientē traieci: mili
aria p̄tinet. dxi. Hec insula ē affectāda ⁊ affe
ctata nō spernēda in qua ⁊ si aliaꝝ om̄ vt dixi
p̄ inuictissimo Rege nro solenniter possessio
nem accepi: earūqꝫ imperiū dicto Regi peni
tus cōmittit: i oportuniōri tñ loco: atqꝫ om̄i lu
cro ⁊ cōmertio p̄decenti: cuiusdā magne ville:
cui Natiuitatis dñi nomē dedim⁹: possessionē
peculiariter accepi. ibiqꝫ arcem quandaz eri
gere extemplo iussi: que modo iam debet esse
pacta: in qua hofes qui necessarij sunt viss: cū
om̄i armoz genere: ⁊ vltra annū victu oportu
no reliq. Itē quādā carauellā: ⁊ p alijs p̄struē
bis tā i hac arte q̄ in ceteri peritos: ac eiusdē

Insula hispanica



insule Regis erga nos beniuolentiā ⁊ familia-
ritatē incredibilē. Sūt em̄ gētēs ille amabiles
admodū ⁊ benigne: eo q̄ Rex p̄dictus me fra-
trem suum dici gloriabat̄. Et si animū reuoca-
rent: ⁊ his q̄ ī arce manserūt nocere uelint: ne-
queūt: quia armis carēt: nudi icedūt: ⁊ nimiū
timidi. ideo dictā arcem tenētes: dū taxat p̄t
totā eā insulā nullo sibi imminente discrimine
(dūmodo leges quas dedim⁹ ac regimē nō ex-
cedāt) facile detinere. In om̄ib⁹ his insulis ut
intellexi: quisq; vni tm̄ piugi acquiescit: p̄ter
principes aut reges: q̄bus viginti habere licz.
Femine magis q̄ viri laborare vident̄: nec be-
ne potui intelligere an habeāt bona ppria: vi-
di em̄ qd̄ vn⁹ habebat alijs īpartiri: p̄stim da-
pes/ obsonia/ ⁊ hmōi. Nullū ap̄d eos monst̄
reperi: ut pleriq; existimabant: sed hoīes ma-
gne reuerētie atq; benignos. Nec sunt nigri ve-
lut ethiopes. habēt crines planos ac demissos
nō degunt vbi radiorū solaris emicat calor. p̄
magna nāq; hic est solis vehementia: p̄pterea
q̄ ab equinoctiali linea distat. vbi videtur/ gra-
dus sex ⁊ viginti Ex montiū cacuminib⁹ ma-
ximū q̄s viget frig⁹: s; id q̄dem moderant̄ In-
di: tū loci psuetudie: tū rex calidissimaz q̄b⁹
frequēter ⁊ luxuriose vescunt̄ presidio. Itaq;
mōstra aliq̄ nō vidi: neq; eorū alicubi habui co-

gnitionem: excepta quadaz insula Charis nū-
cupata: que secunda ex Hispana in Indiam
transfretatibus existit. quam gens quedam a
finitimis habita ferocior incolit. hi carne hu-
mana vescunt. Habent predicti biremiū gene-
ra plurima: quibus in omnes Indicas insulas
traijciunt/depredāt/surripiūt q̄ quecūq̄ p̄nt.
Nihil ab alijs differunt nisi q̄ gerunt more fe-
mineo longos crines. vtunt arcub⁹ et spiculis
arundineis: fixis (vt dixim⁹) in grossiori pte at-
tenuatis hastilib⁹. ideo q̄ habēt feroces: qua-
re ceteri Indi inexhausto metu plectuntur: sz
hos ego nihili facio plus q̄ alios. Hi sunt qui
coeunt cum quibusdam feminis: que sole insu-
lam Abateunin primā ex Hispana in Indiam
traijcientib⁹ habitant. He autē femine nulluz
sui sexus opus exercent: vtunt em̄ arcub⁹ ⁊ spi-
cul⁹ sicuti d̄ eaz piugib⁹ dixi muniūt: sese lami-
nis eneis q̄ ⁊ maxia apd̄ eas copia existit. Ali-
am mibi insulā affirmant supradicta Hispana
maiorē: ei⁹ incole carēt pilis. auro q̄ inf̄ alias
potissimū exuberat. Hui⁹ insule ⁊ aliaz q̄s vi-
di hoīes mecū porto: q̄ hoz q̄ dixi testimoniū
phibēt. Deniq̄ vt nri discessus et celeris reuer-
sōis cōpēdiū: ac emolumētū breuib⁹ astringā
h̄ polliceoz: me nris Regib⁹ inuictissimis puo
eoz fultū auxilio: tantū auri datuz quantum

eis fuerit opus. tñ vero aromatz. bombicis.
massicis (q̄ apud Ethium vñtaxat inuenit) tan-
tũq; ligni aloes. tantum suoz hydrophilato-
rum: quantum eozũ maiestas voluerit exigere.
item reubarbarũ talis aromatz genera: q̄ hi
quos in dicta arce reliqui sã inuenisse: atq; in-
uenturos existimo. qñ quidem ego nullibi ma-
gis sum moratus nisi quantum me coegerit v̄-
ti: preterq; in villa Matuitatis: dũ arcem con-
tere & tuta omnia esse prouidi. ~~Quæ~~ & si maria
et inaudita sunt: multo tamẽ maiora forent si
naues mihi vt ratio exigit subuenissent. Vt
multũ ac mirabile hoc: nec nostris meritis eoz
respondẽs: sed sancte Christiane fidei: nostro-
rumq; Regũ pietati ac religioni: quia qd hu-
manus cõsequi nõ poterat intellectus: id hũ-
nis concessit diuinus. Solet em̄ deus suos su-
os: quicq; sus p̄cepta diligũt: etiã i impossibili-
bus exaudire: vt nobis i p̄ntia p̄rigit: q̄ ea p̄se-
cuti sum⁹: q̄ hacten⁹ mortaliũ vires nĩme atti-
gerãt. nã si harũ insularũ q̄piã aliq̄d sc̄pserũt aut
locuti sũt: oẽsq; ambages & piccuras nemo se
eas vidisse asserit: vñ p̄pe videbat̄ fabula. Igi-
tur Rex & Regia p̄ncipes ac eoz regna felicis-
sima: cũcteq; alie Christianoz puincie Salua-
tori dño nro Iesu xp̄o agam⁹ gr̄as: q̄ tãta nos
victoria munereq; donauit: celebrẽt p̄cessiões

peragant solennia sacra. festaq; fronde velent
delubra. Exultet Chriſt^o i terris: quē admodū
in celis exultat: cum tot populorum p̄ditas añ
hac animas ſaluatum iri p̄uidet. Letemur z
nos: tū p̄pter exaltationē noſtre fidei. tum p̄-
pter rerū temporaliū incremēta: quoz nō ſolū
Iſpania ſed vniuerſa Chriſtianitas eſt futu-
ra p̄ticeps. Hec vt geſta ſunt ſic breuiter enar-
rata. Vale. Liſbone pridie ydus Martij.

Chriſtofor^o Colom Oceane claſſis P̄fect^o.

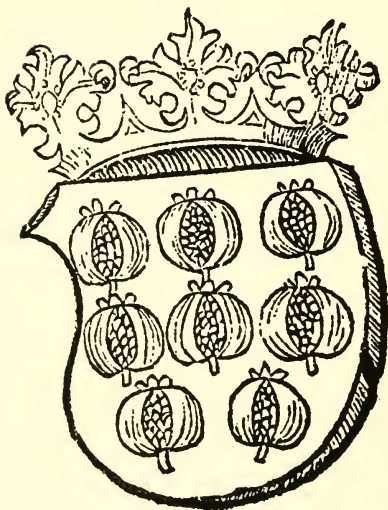
Epigrama. R. L. de Corbaria Ep̄copi
Montiſpaluſij
Ad Inuictiſſimū Regē Iſpaniarū

Jam nulla Iſpanis tellus addēda triūphis:
Atq; parum tantis virib^o/orbis erat.
Nunc longe Lois regio deprenſa ſub yndis.
Auctura eſt titulos Beticę magne tuos.
Unde repertori incrito referenda Colūbo
Gratia: ſz ſummo eſt maior habēda deo:
Qui vincēda parat noua regna tibiq; ſibiq;
Teq; ſimul fortem preſtat z eſſe pium.

Fernād^o rex byspania



Granata:



TRANSLATION.

LETTER OF CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS, the great benefactor of the present age, concerning the newly discovered islands of India upon the Ganges, upon which enterprize he was despatched eight months since by the invincible Sovereigns of Spain, Ferdinand and Isabella; directed to Don Rafael Sanchez, Treasurer of their most Serene Highnesses. Translated from the Spanish into Latin by Leandro de Cosco, April 25, 1493, first year of the pontificate of Alexander VI.

As I know you will take pleasure in hearing of the success of my undertaking, I have determined to send you an account of the occurrences of my voyage and discoveries. Thirty-three days after my departure from Cadiz I arrived in the sea of India, where I discovered many islands, inhabited by innumerable people. Of these I took posses-

sion in the name of our fortunate monarch, with public proclamation and colors flying, no one offering any resistance. I named the first of these islands San Salvador, thus bestowing upon it the name of our holy Saviour, under whose protection I made the discovery. The Indians call it Guahanahyn. I gave also a new name to the others, calling the second Santa Maria de la Concepcion, the third Fernandina, the fourth Isabella, the fifth Juana. In the same manner I named the rest. Arriving at the one last mentioned, I sailed along the coast toward the West, discovering so great an extent of land that I could not imagine it to be an island, but the continent of Cathay. I did not, however, discover upon the coast any large cities, all we saw being a few villages and farms, with the inhabitants of which we could not obtain any communication, they all flying at our approach. I continued my course, still expecting to meet with some town or city, but after having gone a great distance, and not meeting with any, and finding myself proceeding toward the North, which I was desirous to avoid on account of the cold, and, moreover, meeting with a contrary wind, I determined to return to the South, and, therefore, put

about and sailed back to a harbour which I had before observed.

At this place I sent two men into the country to see if the king or any cities were to be found. These returned in three days, having discovered a great number of towns, but all of them small, and without any government. In the meantime I had learned from certain Indians whom I had taken here that this country was an island. I returned along the coast to the east, a distance of three hundred and twenty-two miles, which brought me to the extremity of the island. Here I discovered to the East another island, fifty-four miles from Juana. I gave it the name of Espanola, and coasted along the island to the North as at Juana I had proceeded to the East, a distance of five hundred and sixty-four miles. All these islands are very fertile. That of Juana abounds in safe and capacious harbours, which surpass in excellence all I have ever seen elsewhere. It is watered by a great number of large and pleasant rivers, and contains many high mountains.

These islands are of a beautiful appearance, and present a great diversity of views. They may be traversed in any part, and are adorned with a

great variety of exceedingly lofty trees, which to appearance never lose their foliage, for I saw them as verdant and flourishing as they exist in Spain in the month of May, some covered with flowers, others loaded with fruit, according to their different species and their season of bearing, the whole offering a spectacle of great beauty. The nightingale and countless other birds were singing, although it was the month of November when I visited this delightful region. There are, in the island of Juana, six or eight sorts of palm trees, superior to those of our land in height and beauty, and this superiority is likewise observable in the other trees as well as in the herbs and fruits. Here are to be seen the most beautiful pine trees and the most extensive fields and pastures, a great variety of birds, several sorts of honey, and many kinds of metal, with the exception of iron. In the island named Espanola there are lofty and beautiful mountains, large cultivated tracts, woods, fertile fields, and everything adapted to the purposes of agriculture, the pasturage of cattle, and the erection of houses. The excellence of the harbours here, and the abundance of the streams which contribute to the salubrity of the climate,

exceed imagination. There is a considerable difference between the trees, fruits, and fields of this island and those of Juana, but here are found divers sorts of precious drugs, gold, and metals. The inhabitants of both sexes, in Espanola, and all the other islands which I saw or heard of, go naked as they were born, all except a few females who wear at the waist a green leaf, a portion of cotton, or bit of silk, which they manufacture for this purpose.

As I before remarked, they possess no iron, and they neither use nor are acquainted with weapons, to the exercise of which indeed they are not at all adapted, not by reason of any corporal deficiency, as they are very well shaped, but on account of their great timidity. Instead of arms they have canes dried in the sun, to the largest ends of which they fix a piece of wood sharpened at the end; of these, however, they have not the courage to make much use. I have in many instances sent two or three of my men to their towns to communicate with the inhabitants, when the Indians would tumultuously rush out, and seeing our people drawing near, run away with such haste that the father would abandon

his child and the child his father. This timidity was not owing to any violence or injury we offered them, as I was in the practice of making presents of cloth and other things to all the natives whom I met, but arose from their natural mildness and want of courage. Notwithstanding this, as soon as they have thrown aside their fear, and consider themselves in safety, they are very ingenuous and honest, and display great liberality with whatever they possess.

They never refuse to give any thing away which is demanded of them, and will even themselves entreat an acceptance of their property. They exhibit a great friendship towards every one, and will give whatever they have for a trifle or nothing at all. I forbade my men to purchase any thing of them with such worthless articles as bits of earthenware, fragments of platters, broken glass, nails, and thongs of leather, although when they got possession of any such thing they valued it as highly as the most precious jewel in the world. In this manner of bartering, a sailor has acquired for a leather strap or piece of rope, gold to the amount of three sueldos. Others have obtained as much for a matter of still lower value. For

new Spanish coins they would give any thing asked of them, as an ounce and a half or two ounces of gold, or thirty or forty pounds of cotton. Thus they would trade away their cotton and gold like idiots, for broken hoops, platters and glass. I prohibited their traffic on account of its injustice, and made them many presents of useful things which I had carried with me, for the purpose of gaining their affection, in order that they may receive the faith of Jesus Christ, be well disposed towards us, and be inclined to submit to the King and Queen, our Princes, and all the Spaniards, and furthermore that they may furnish us with the commodities which abound among them and we are in want of.

They are not idolators, but believe that all power and goodness is in heaven, and that I had proceeded from that place with my ships and men; under this notion they received me at my first arrival as soon as they had banished their fear. They are not stupid and indolent, but acute and sagacious. Those of them who navigate the seas among those islands give singular accounts of what they have observed upon their voyages, but have never seen people who wear clothes, nor

any ships similar to ours. On my arrival I took by force from the first island a few of the Indians, in order that we might become acquainted with one another's language, and to gain a knowledge of what their country contained. These were of singular use to us, as we came to understand each other in a short time by the help of words and signs. I have them still with me, and they continue in the belief that we come from heaven. This information they published wherever we arrived, exclaiming in a loud voice, "Come! come! and see the celestial people." Upon this call, the natives would come thronging to us, after having banished the fear which seized them at first, men, women and children, old and young, crowding the roads and bringing us victuals and drink, with the utmost affection and reverence.

In every one of these islands there are a great number of canoes, each one made of a solid log, of a narrow shape, somewhat resembling our fustas, but swifter in the water; they are navigated solely by oars. They are of different sizes, the most of them containing seats for eighteen rowers. Throughout these islands there is no diversity in the appearance of the people, their manners or

language, all the inhabitants understanding one another; a very favorable circumstance, in my opinion, to the design which I have no doubt is entertained by our king, namely, to convert them to the holy Christian faith, to which as far as I can perceive they are well disposed. I have said that I sailed from W. to E. three hundred and twenty-two miles along the island of Juana; from the length of this course I am confident that this island is larger than England and Scotland together, for besides the extent which I coasted there are two other provinces to the West which I did not survey. One of these is named by the Indians Anam, and contains inhabitants with tails. These tracts extend to the distance of a hundred and eighty miles, as I have learnt from the Indians with me, who are well acquainted with them.

The island of Espanola is as large as that part of Spain which extends from Catalonia to Fontarabia, which I infer from the extent of that side of it which I sailed along, being five hundred and forty miles in length. I took possession of this fine island, as I had done of the others, in the name of our invincible king; and fixed upon a spot for a large city here, as I judged it the most favorable

place. I called it Navidad, and ordered the construction of a fortress here, which is by this time finished. At this place I left a sufficient number of men, with all sorts of arms, and a sufficiency of provisions for above a year. I also left them a caravel and expert workmen, after having secured them the friendship of the king of this part of the country. The people are a friendly and amiable race, and the king took a pride in calling himself my brother. Even if their sentiments should change, and they should become hostile towards us, they will not be able to effect any injury to those who remain at the fortress, as they are destitute of weapons, go naked, and are very cowardly, so that those whom I have left there will be able to retain the whole island in subjection without any danger, if they adhere to the regulations with which I charged them.

Each of the natives, as far as I can understand, has one wife, with the exception of the King and Princes, who are permitted to have as many as twenty. The women appear to do more labour than the men. Whether there exists any such thing here as private property I have not been able to ascertain, as I have observed that an individual

has been set to distribute to the others, in particular, food and such things. I found no ferocious, sanguinary people in these parts, as some seem to have imagined the people here to be, but they are a very mild and friendly race. Their color is not black like that of the Ethiopians. Their hair is lank and hanging down. They do not inhabit those parts where the sun's rays are very powerful, as the heat is excessive here, the latitude being apparently twenty-six degrees. On the summits of the mountains the cold is great, but they do not suffer any incommmodity from it, by being accustomed to the climate, and by the use of hot meats and drinks, which they consume very prodigally.

People of a monstrous description I saw none nor heard of any, except those of the island named Caris, which is the second on the course from Espanola to India; this island is inhabited by people who are regarded by their neighbors as exceedingly ferocious; they feed upon human flesh. These people have many sorts of canoes, with which they make incursions upon all the isles of India, robbing and plundering wherever they go. Their difference from the others consists in their wearing long hair like that of the women, and

in using bows and arrows of cane, these last constructed, as I have already related, by fixing a piece of sharpened wood at the larger end. On this account they are deemed very ferocious by the other Indians, and are much feared by them; I think, however, these men are precisely like the others. These are the natives who go to visit the females, who are the sole inhabitants, of the island of Matenin, which is the first on the route from Espanola to India. These women exercise none of the common occupations of their sex, but manage the bow and dart, as we are told of the ancients. They wear armour made of plates of copper, of which metal they have great abundance.

I am assured by the Indians that there is another island, larger than Espanola, whose inhabitants are without hair, and who possess a greater quantity of gold than the others. From this island, as well as the others, I have taken some of the inhabitants to confirm the accounts which I give.

Finally, to sum up the whole, and state briefly the great profits of this voyage, I am enabled to promise the acquisition, by a trifling assistance from their Majesties, of any quantity of gold, drugs, cotton, and mastick, which last article is

found only in the island of Scio; also any quantity of aloe, and as many slaves for the service of the marine as their Majesties may stand in need of. The same may be said of rhubarb, and a great variety of other things, which, I have no doubt, will be discovered by those I have left at the fort, as I did not stop long at any single place, unless obliged to do so by the weather, with the exception of the city of Navidad, where we made some stay to build the fort and provide the necessary securities for the place.

Although the discoveries actually accomplished appear great and surprising, yet I should have effected much more had I been furnished with a proper fleet. Nevertheless, the great success of this enterprise is not to be ascribed to my own merits, but to the holy Catholic faith and the piety of our Sovereigns, the Lord often granting to men what they never imagine themselves capable of effecting, as he is accustomed to hear the prayers of his servants and those who love his commandments, even in that which appears impossible; in this manner has it happened to me, who have succeeded in an undertaking never before accomplished by man. For although some persons

have written or spoken of the existence of these islands, they have all rested their assertions upon conjecture, no one having ever affirmed that he saw them, on which account their existence has been deemed fabulous.

And now ought the King, Queen, Princes, and all their dominions, as well as the whole of Christendom, to give thanks to our Saviour Jesus Christ, who has granted us such a victory and great success. Let processions be ordered, let solemn festivals be celebrated, let the temples be filled with boughs and flowers. Let Christ rejoice upon earth as he does in heaven, to witness the coming salvation of so many people heretofore given over to perdition. Let us rejoice for the exaltation of our faith, as well as for the augmentation of our temporal prosperity, in which not only Spain, but all Christendom shall participate. Such are the events which I have described to you with brevity. Adieu.

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS,

Admiral of the Armada of the Ocean.

LISBON, *March 14th.*

